

House Resolution 448

By: Representatives Cooper of the 43rd, Hatchett of the 150th, Houston of the 170th, and Martin of the 49th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on the Safe Staffing of Nurses in Georgia; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, safe staffing is defined as the development and implementation of valid,
4 reliable, unit-by-unit nurse staffing plans created in coordination with direct care registered
5 nurses (RNs) themselves, and based on each unit's unique circumstances and changing needs;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, the existence of a safe staffing plan in a practice environment serves as a vital
8 tool in the recruitment and retention of qualified nursing professionals to aid in the goal of
9 eliminating a drastic nursing shortage in many areas of Georgia; and

10 WHEREAS, nurse staffing levels are crucial to both optimization of quality of care and
11 controlling institutional costs in both short and long-term fiscal planning; and

12 WHEREAS, nurses represent the largest clinical subgroup in a hospital setting and have been
13 subjected to budgetary constraints in certain settings; and

14 WHEREAS, nurses serve an integral role in a patient's overall healthcare experience from
15 admission to discharge, and after, through care coordination and patient education; and

16 WHEREAS, studies point to appropriate staffing levels providing for a reduction in length
17 of patient stay, preventable events such as falls and infection and patient mortality rates; and

18 WHEREAS, appropriate staffing levels are determined by examining various contributing
19 factors, including: patient complexity, acuity, or stability; the number of admissions,
20 discharges and transfers within a defined timeframe; professional nurse and staff skill level
21 and expertise; unit physical space and layout; and the availability of technical support and
22 other ancillary resources; and

23 WHEREAS, in 2017, the state's current shortage of licensed nursing professionals was on
24 pace to have the nation's sixth highest gap between the supply and demand of nurses by
25 2030.

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
27 GEORGIA:

28 (1) **Creation of a joint study committee.** There is created the Joint Study Committee
29 on the Safe Staffing of Nurses in Georgia.

30 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of 12 members as
31 follows:

32 (A) Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the
33 House of Representatives, including the chairperson of the Health and Human Services
34 Committee, who shall serve as cochairperson;

35 (B) Three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including
36 the chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee, who shall serve as
37 cochairperson;

38 (C) The President of the Georgia Nurses Association, or his or her designee;

39 (D) The President of a Georgia chapter of the American Association of Critical Care
40 Nurses, or his or her designee;

41 (E) Two members from the private sector with experience in healthcare appointed by
42 the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

43 (F) Two members from the private sector with experience in healthcare appointed by
44 the President of the Senate.

45 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study to examine best practices
46 for the safe staffing of nurses in a practice environment and to provide recommendations
47 for the implementation of a standard of safe staffing for nurses in Georgia and
48 recommend any action or legislation which the committee deems necessary or
49 appropriate.

50 (4) **Meetings.** The cochairpersons shall call all meetings of the committee. The
51 committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem
52 necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform
53 its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

54 (5) **Allowances, expenses, and funding.**

55 (A) The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided
56 for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

57 (B) Members of the committee who are state officials, other than legislative members,
58 or state employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the committee,

but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members of the committee in the same manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.

(C) Members of the committee who are not legislators, state officials, or state employees shall receive a daily expense allowance in an amount the same as that specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, as well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state employees.

(D) The allowances and expenses authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives and Senate; except that funds for the reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative members, and state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available to their respective agencies.

(6) Report.

(A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that include suggestions for proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file a report of the same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

(B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

(C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee. A report so approved shall be signed by the cochairpersons of the committee and filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate.

(D) In the absence of an approved report, the cochairpersons may file with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate copies of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

(7) Abolishment. The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2019.